

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Josefina Vidal: Cuba never should have been on US terror list
— PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 9 MARCH 16, 2015

‘You can count on these five soldiers’

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA — “This honor we receive today is, at the same time, a summons which demands that we rise to the occasion to meet the new challenges which the Revolution faces,” said Gerardo Hernández Feb. 24. Hernández was addressing Cuban President Raúl Castro and more than

CUBAN 5 ‘TO MEET THE NEW CHALLENGES WHICH THE REVOLUTION FACES’

2,000 fellow Cubans and international guests at a ceremony here at which he and Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González were each formally awarded by Castro the distinction “Hero of the Republic.”

“The homeland can count on these five soldiers,” Hernández said. We will “always be loyal to the ideas of Martí, of Che, of Fidel and of Raúl.”

Hernández was speaking on behalf of the men known around the world as the Cuban Five, who were reunited on Cuban soil Dec. 17, more than 16

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Socialist candidate: ‘Workers need a labor party’

BY ILONA GERSH AND ANNE PARKER

CHICAGO — “None of the bosses’ candidates got a majority of the vote in the Feb. 24 mayoral election, so a runoff election will take place April 7,” Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate in that election, told a well-attended Militant Labor Forum here Feb. 28. “That means we can use the Socialist Workers Party campaign for five more weeks to advance an independent working-class road forward as we join workers picket lines and protests — like the national oil workers strike.”

“We will continue to speak out on the big political questions confronting the toilers worldwide, outlining a course that advances the interests of our class and our allies among working farmers,” Fein said. “We will stand against Jew-hatred and anti-

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Help the ‘Militant’ get around!

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Oil workers strike for safety enters 2nd month

Steelworkers seek to organize contract workers



Militant/Linda Avers

Steelworkers union refinery workers and supporters march on Marathon Oil headquarters in Findlay, Ohio, Feb. 24, chanting “Safe refineries save lives” and “No contract, no peace.”

BY ANNE PARKER

FINDLAY, Ohio — Several hundred United Steelworkers strikers and supporters rallied and marched in sub-freezing temperatures to the Marathon Oil headquarters here Feb. 24, chanting, “Safe refineries save lives” and “No contract, no peace.” Sizable contingents of strikers from the BP-Husky refinery near Toledo and the Marathon refinery in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, participated.

In addition to 24-hour picketing at the 15 refineries and petrochemical plants in seven states currently out in the nationwide strike, union members and supporters are organizing rallies and protests, joining other labor battles, coordinating medical and financial assistance for members in need, and hosting a myriad of events to involve family members and supporters.

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NJ protesters demand: ‘Charge cops who killed Jerame Reid!’



Militant

Marchers protest cop killing of Jerame Reid in Bridgeton, New Jersey, Feb. 28. “This is not about Black and white,” Sheila Reid, Jerame’s mother, told crowd, “it’s about right and wrong.”

BY OSBORNE HART

BRIDGETON, New Jersey — More than 160 people marched here Feb. 28 to demand prosecution of cops Brame Days and Roger Worley in the shooting death of Jerame Reid, an unarmed Black man.

“This is not about Black and white.

It’s about right and wrong,” Sheila Reid, Jerame’s mother, told the protesters.

Reid and Tanya Dickerson-Brown, whose son Brandon Tate-Brown was killed by Philadelphia police Dec. 15, led the march from the site where

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Selma, Ala., anniversary march challenges erosion of voting rights

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Fifty years ago the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march for voting rights started with a brutal assault by cops and deputized thugs on Black rights demonstrators on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, and culminated in a rally of more than 25,000 on the steps of the Alabama state Capitol, leading to passage of the fed-

eral Voting Rights Act. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and others are organizing to retrace the 1965 march to challenge the erosion of voting rights in the U.S. today.

The 54-mile march will begin in Selma on Sunday, March 8, and conclude with a rally on the steps of the state Capitol Friday, March 13.

“This is not just a March in Commemoration, but it is also a March

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Ukraine workers mobilize to defend wages, jobs, sovereignty

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Miners and airport workers in Ukraine are fighting to defend their jobs and against the rapid erosion of living conditions amid a deepening capitalist economic crisis. A cease-fire between Moscow-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces is, for the moment, giving some respite to working people from a war that has cost some 6,000 lives. In the sepa-

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Locked-out Texas aluminum workers win support

Muslim youth in Oslo lead protest against Jew-hatred

BY NAOMI CRAINE

“We want to show our support to the Jews after what happened in Copenhagen,” said Hibaq Farah, a young Muslim student, explaining why she joined a “ring of peace” around the main synagogue in Oslo, Norway, Feb. 21.

In response to the Feb. 15 killing of Dan Uzan, a Danish Jew who was a volunteer guard outside a synagogue in Copenhagen, by Omar el-Hussein, a self-proclaimed partisan of Islamic State, a number of Muslim youth in Norway set up a Facebook page to organize the event. “Muslims will show that we sharply distance ourselves from all types of Jew-hatred,” they said.

More than 1,000 people gathered to support the action, which was called on just a few days notice. Dozens of Muslim youth joined hands outside during the Saturday service to oppose anti-Semitic attacks and defend the right of the congregants to practice their religion.

“No to anti-Semitism, no to Islamophobia,” was one of the most popular chants.

“We Muslims know very well how it is to be discriminated against,” Hajrah Arshad, 17, told the rally. “We hope we can learn from each other today. We won’t get anywhere if we don’t stand together.”

“This is the best possible response we can give to the polarization we’ve seen in debates after the attacks in France and Denmark,” Youssef Bartho Assidiq, another participant, told

Agence France-Presse, referring also to the January killing of four Jews at a kosher supermarket in Paris.

There are approximately 1,300 Jews in Norway, out of a population of 5.3 million. In 2008 a Norwegian Islamist was convicted for a shooting attack on the Oslo synagogue two years earlier. No one was killed, but the building was damaged.

Another of the organizers of the action was Muhammed Ali Chishti, who in 2009 gave a talk titled, “Why I Hate Jews and Gays.” In press interviews before and after the vigil he said his statements at that time were “anti-Semitic” and “unacceptable,” and that his views have changed. “I was very angry at that time” over the Israeli government’s attacks on Palestinians in Gaza, he said, adding “a



Dozens of Muslim youth ringed the synagogue in Oslo, Norway, Feb. 21 in response to violent attacks on Jews in Denmark and France. More than 1,000 people joined in solidarity.

lot of what I said was based on conspiracy theories.”

But today “there are many signs of a dangerous polarization between religions in Europe,” Chishti said. “It’s

important to show we are not intolerant.”

Greg McCartan in Oslo contributed to this article.

NJ protesters: ‘Charge cops who killed Jerame Reid’

Continued from front page

Jerame was killed to the Cumberland County Courthouse. Police videotaped the crowd and sharpshooters were visible on rooftops along the march route in this town of 25,000 residents, surrounded by farms and food processing plants in southern New Jersey.

Jerame Reid was shot and killed Dec. 30 after Days and Worley stopped the Jaguar that Reid was a passenger in, claiming the car ran a stop sign. A recording of the entire confrontation made on the police car dashboard camera was released Jan. 20 upon request by the news media under New Jersey’s open

records law. The video shows that the car had stopped at the stop sign.

Anger over the killing is widespread in the city. Days, who is Black, is known for harassing area youth. Latiasha Davis told the *Daily Herald* that Days had been harassing her teenage son. When she heard the gunshots that night, “You know what my first thoughts were?” she told the paper. “Days has killed my son.”

Nine complaints have been filed against Days for previous incidents of harassment and abuse since he joined the Bridgeton cops in 2012. All were thrown out.

“Get them out of the car,” Days can be heard telling his partner in the video. “We got a gun in the glove compartment.”

“I’m going to shoot you,” Days yells at Reid. “You reach for something you’re gonna be f—ing dead.”

“Bro, I got no reason to reach for nothing,” Reid responds. When Days repeats several times that if Reid reaches for anything he’s dead and “don’t you f—ing move,” Reid says, “I’m getting out of the car and I’m gonna lie on the ground.” As he gets out of the car with

his hands up Days shoots him several times. Officer Worley, who is Caucasian, shoots once.

After the shooting, Days continues to yell, “I’m going to f—ing shoot you.”

The two cops are on administrative leave but have not been charged.

“This is not just an issue in Bridgeton, or Philadelphia, or New Jersey,” Walter Hudson, head of the local National Awareness Alliance civil rights organization, told protesters. “This a national issue of police brutality.”

Mirabella Meotti, who worked with Reid in a vegetable processing plant in nearby Vineland, joined the march. “I’m here to show support for Jerame and justice,” she told the *Militant*.

Protesters came from Atlantic City, Newark, Philadelphia and the surrounding communities. The action is the fifth since the shooting, and more are planned.

“This is what needs to happen, there needs to be millions out here in these streets,” Hudson told the crowd. Then, he said, “They will pull us into their office and sit down and say ‘let’s talk about it, what do you want brothers and sisters.’”

THE MILITANT

Fight against police killings, abuse

There is a growing response by working people to killings and other brutalities carried out daily by police across the country. The ‘Militant’ covers these struggles as well as discussions about what the source of cop brutality is and what it will take to end it.



Militant/Clay Dennison
Protest of 1,000 in Pasco, Wash., Feb. 14 after cops killed Antonio Zambrano-Montes.

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On the Picket Line Editor: Maggie Trowe

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Naomi Craine, Frank Forrestal, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Gerardo Sánchez, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant’s* views. These are expressed in editorials.

‘Workers need labor party’

Continued from front page

Semitic violence, which is poison for the working class. We will back the battles of Ukrainian workers to defend their national sovereignty from Moscow’s attacks, as they fight at the same time to defend their jobs and wages, and their social and political rights against attacks from the propertied oligarchs in Kiev.”

“We will join and build solidarity with members of the Steelworkers union on strike, fighting for control over conditions on the job, against dangerously long hours and forced overtime and protection for those who live around the refineries,” Fein said, noting that he had spent election day at an oil workers strike solidarity rally in Findlay, Ohio. “We will advance demands to defend working farmers, who are not able to pay for rent on the land they farm because of sharply falling grain and dairy prices.”

Incumbent Democratic Mayor Rahm Emanuel failed to get 50 percent of the vote. He now faces a run-off with Cook County Commissioner Jesus Garcia, another Democrat, who came in second with 34 percent. Garcia projects himself as a champion of the neighborhoods.

Emanuel, former chief of staff for President Barack Obama, won his first term in 2011, but lost popularity among many workers and African-Americans because of his attacks on Chicago teachers. Their strike in 2012 won widespread working-class support. Emanuel’s attacks included moves to close 50 public schools, lay off 1,000 teachers and staff, a \$30 billion shortfall in the city workers’

pension fund, and continued police brutality.

Garcia has the backing of the Chicago Teachers Union. CTU President Karen Lewis threatened to run against Emanuel herself, but dropped out of the race after she became seriously ill.

The *Washington Post* called the Chicago race “the latest front in a simmering nationwide battle between the establishment governing wing of the Democratic Party and a more restive, populist wing.”

“There is no difference between the capitalist candidates for working people,” Fein told the 25 people at the forum. “They have different takes on how to divert workers from fighting for an independent road forward, like the workers and farmers in Cuba did when they overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and established their own workers and farmers government.”

“I told workers at the Ohio rally at the Marathon Oil headquarters that I was there because their fight is more important for the working class than the vote in Chicago,” Fein said.

Fein joins striking oil workers’ rally

“I have worked at Marathon for 39 years. I work with two people that I never see during the shift. They work half a mile from me. We communicate by radio,” Larry Jarvis, who came to the Findlay rally from Catlettsburg, Kentucky, where he works at the refinery, told Fein. “My crew used to be four, now it’s two. This strike is due. If we had an explosion it would be worse than Mount Carbon.”

On Feb. 16, a 109-car CSX tanker

NY SWP candidate for Congress: ‘Back oil workers!’

NEW YORK — Maggie Trowe announced her campaign as Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in the 11th District in New York, speaking at a Feb. 28 Militant Labor Forum on “The Rise of Workers’ Resistance and Developing Self-Confidence.” The special election, set for May 5, was called Feb. 20 after Rep. Michael Grimm, a former FBI agent, was indicted for tax fraud. Also running for the seat is Richmond County District Attorney Daniel Donovan, whose office failed to bring an indictment against Daniel Pantaleo, the cop who killed Eric Garner in a chokehold in Staten Island last July. Trowe campaigned that morning at the Phillips 66 refinery in Linden, New Jersey, talking to Teamsters and other workers and handing out a campaign statement supporting the oil workers on strike at 15 refineries and petrochemical plants nationwide. Two days earlier she joined a protest at the Mexican consulate demanding an explanation of what happened to 43 Mexican students who disappeared last September.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS



Militant/Arthur Hughes

train carrying volatile crude oil derailed near Mount Carbon, West Virginia, with a number of cars exploding and burning, forcing the evacuation of more than 2,000 people and fouling the Kanawha River.

“The outcome of your strike has everything to do with our future,” Fein said. “We live in a dictatorship of capital where the billionaires own everything — the economy, the government, the courts, the cops and the army. We need to replace their dictatorship with workers power. A revolution will be necessary to accomplish this.”

“I know what’s going on,” replied

Jarvis. “You see it every day. What is hard is how to change it.”

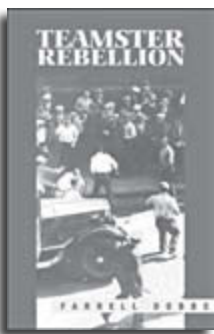
“The bosses try to keep us trapped in the two-party shell game, saying we’ve got to back the ‘lesser evil’ capitalist candidate or we’ll get worse. They want to hold us back from exercising our potential power,” Fein said. “We need a labor party. A labor party could mobilize all working people behind the oil refinery strike.”

“Before I worked at the refinery, I worked at Airgas for years. They closed the plant and sold it off, getting rid of the union,” John Limes, an operator at BP-Husky and member of Steelworkers Local 1-346, told Fein. “The unions are a dying breed here. We are not going to build this country back up by paying workers \$8 an hour.”

“Our unions have to be rebuilt and transformed,” replied Fein. “And strikes like this will help do this.”

John Studer, editor of the *Militant*, also spoke at the forum, talking about workers’ resistance to the world crisis of capitalism, from the U.S. to Ukraine.

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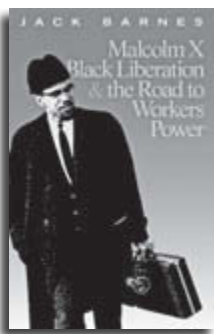
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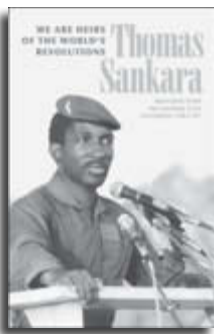


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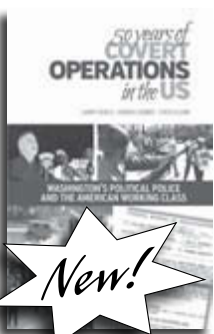
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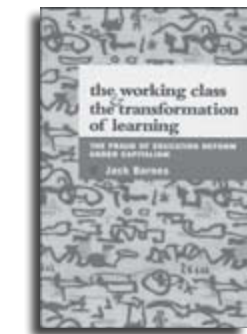
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— CALENDAR —

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

Sixth Minnesota Cuban Film Festival: ‘Cuba and Chernobyl.’ Thurs., March 12, 7 p.m. *St. Anthony Main Theater, 115 Main St. SE. Sponsored by the Minnesota Cuba Committee in partnership with the Film Society of Minneapolis/St. Paul and the Cuban Film Institute.*

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Exhibit of ‘I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived’: Paintings by Antonio Guerrero, One of Recently Freed Cuban Five. March 7 – April 7. Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (closed for lunch 12:30-1:30)

Opening Reception: Presentation on the Exhibit’s Creation and the Cuban Five Today. Sat., March 7, 7 p.m.

Panel Discussion: The Cuban Five’s On-going Fight to Defend Cuba’s Sovereignty. End the U.S. Embargo Against Cuba! Sat., March 28, 7 p.m. *Musicians Association of Seattle, Local 76-493, AFM, 3209 Eastlake Ave. E. Email: guerreroexhibit@gmail.com. Sponsored by Volunteers for the Antonio Guerrero Exhibit.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Cuba, Africa and the World. A panel discussion. Sat., March 14, 3:30 p.m. *Westminster Presbyterian Church, 400 I St. SW Tel.: (202) 320-6017.*

Workers protest in Ukraine

Continued from front page

ratist-held areas miners and others continue to try to build unions and defend themselves, despite threats and obstacles from pro-boss “people’s republic” officials.

A March 4 explosion in the Zasyadko mine in the separatist-held city of Donetsk left several miners dead and dozens more missing and feared dead. In 2007 a methane explosion at the mine killed more than 100.

The Ukrainian government dispatched rescue workers to the scene, but they were refused access by the separatists.

Hundreds of miners from across the country demonstrated in Kiev March 2, as parliament debated the national budget. Workers are demanding financing to keep state-owned mines open and operating, as well as payment of back wages. The same day miners went on strike at two mines in the western region of Lviv, demanding funding for the mines.

“Today miners can’t feed their families and don’t know if they’ll be working tomorrow,” Mykhailo Volynets, chair of the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU), told the Kiev rally, as miners banged their hardhats on the wall and pavement. Miners are holding meetings and protests across Ukraine.

Members of the Independent Trade Union of Aviators at Boryspil International Airport in Kiev carried out their first legal strike Feb. 25-28. More than 100 workers took part in the action demanding the reinstatement of illegally fired workers, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine reported.

Workers at Boryspil have been resisting attempts to “privatize” operations

and eliminate their jobs ever since the government of former President Viktor Yanukovych appointed an airport director previously known for selling off the Odessa airport.

“The Maidan disrupted the existing schemes,” said a Feb. 23 article in *Ukrainian Week* magazine, referring to the mass popular protests that overthrew the pro-Moscow Yanukovych government a year ago, reasserting Ukrainian sovereignty. Now Yevhen Dykhne, a new airport director, is pushing to “optimize” operations by outsourcing ground crews and passenger service to contractors that are direct or indirect subsidiaries of Ukraine International Airlines. The union says this could mean up to 700 job cuts.

Workers pay for capitalist crisis

These fights take place as workers are bearing the brunt of a spiraling economic crisis. Ukraine’s national currency, the hryvnia, plummeted to a new low of 34 to the dollar Feb. 26, boosting soaring inflation and eating into workers’ already insufficient wages and pensions.

As part of “reforms” demanded by the International Monetary Fund, Washington, Berlin and other imperialist powers in exchange for loans, the government raised domestic natural gas prices 50 percent in 2014, and plans an additional 40 percent increase this year.



Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine

Members of Independent Trade Union of Aviators during Feb. 25-28 strike at Boryspil International Airport in Kiev, Ukraine. Signs read from left, “Stop lay offs. Fighting for every job!” “Corrupt people out of power!” and “Defend the human right to work!”

As part of the new budget, parliament decided March 2 to cut workers’ pensions by 15 percent.

Less than a week after Yanukovych fled, Russian troops on Feb. 28, 2014, occupied the Crimean Peninsula, and within weeks Moscow annexed it. Opponents of Russian domination, including the Crimean Tatar people, have faced bannings, denial of the right to meet and protest, and other attacks in the year since.

Boris Nemtsov, one of the main bourgeois politicians opposing Russian President Vladimir Putin, was assassinated Feb. 27 in a drive-by shooting in Moscow. His supporters say he was preparing a report on Moscow’s responsibility for the war in eastern Ukraine, with evidence showing Russian soldiers are fighting there. Tens of thousands rallied in Moscow March 1, turning a planned anti-war protest into a vigil for Nemtsov. Many walked past the Kremlin carrying signs reading, “I am not afraid.”

During the final days of February the separatist forces and Ukrainian army and volunteer units began pulling back

Continued on page 7

Fla. prison censorship of ‘Militant’ reversed again

BY NAOMI CRAINE

For the second time in two months, Florida prison authorities had to reverse an attempt by the Taylor Correctional Institution to ban an issue of the *Militant*. This continues a string of victories over the last year and a half against attempts by Florida prison officials to prevent *Militant* subscribers from receiving the paper.

Ironically, prison censors ordered the Jan. 19 issue “impounded” because a front-page article “‘Militant’ Beats Back Censorship at Fla. Prison” reported how their efforts to bar the paper failed last time.

On Feb. 25 the *Militant* received notice that the paper was seized because it “discusses local prison,” that is, the Taylor CI. The censors also objected to

the paper’s annual holiday “Greetings to Workers Behind Bars!” saying it showed “disrespect to authority.”

“The efforts of tens of thousands behind bars to use hunger strikes and other protests to demand their rights and assert their dignity has won grudging gains from some prison authorities,” the editorial said. “Victories have been won in the U.K. recently and at Taylor Correctional Institution in Florida on the right of inmates to get books and newspapers, including the *Militant*.”

David Goldstein, an attorney for the *Militant* in New York who has worked with the Florida American Civil Liberties Union to beat back previous attacks on the rights of the paper and its readers in prisons there, called Florida Department of Corrections Library Ser-

vices Administrator Marty Morrison to indicate they would be challenging the impoundment. Morrison said that they had already reversed Taylor authorities’ impoundment.

She sent Goldstein a notice marking the *Militant* issue as “approved” on the state’s “Admissible Reading Materials list,” dated the same day the paper received the notice of impoundment.

Defending the right of subscribers to receive their paper is an ongoing fight not just for the *Militant*, but also for publications such as the *Prison Legal News* and *San Francisco Bay View* that champion the rights of workers behind bars and report on their fights for respect and dignity.

Now we’ll see what happens when this issue gets to Taylor. ...

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ILLINOIS

Chicago
Paris and Berlin Keep Squeeze on Greece — Workers and Farmers Continue to Shoulder Debt Crisis. Speaker: John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 13, 7:30 p.m. 2018 S. Ashland Ave. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

NEW YORK

New York
The Obama Administration and the Netanyahu Visit; the Israeli Elections; the Stakes for Israel, Palestine and the Toilers of the Middle East. Speaker: Dave Prince, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 7. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$10 (\$5 for forum only). 520 8th Ave. (near 36th Street), 17th Floor, Room 17B. Tel.: (646) 434-8117 or (347) 805-1927.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia
Oppose Prison Gag Law. Fri., March 13, 7 p.m. 3701 Pulaski Ave. Tel.: (215) 225-1270.

CANADA

Montreal
Struggles Against the Bosses Increase in North America: No to Government Intervention in Labor Battles. Speaker: Marc Pelletier, Communist League. Sat., March 7. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis #204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

UNITED KINGDOM

London
The Moral Values of the Cuban Revolution. Showing of Documentary ‘Cuba and Chernobyl.’ Fri., March 13, 7 p.m. First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (entrance in Brick Lane). Tel.: (020) 7613-2466.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 16, 1990

On March 3 striking Greyhound bus driver Bob Waterhouse was killed on the picket line in Redding, California. Waterhouse, a 30-year veteran at Greyhound, was crushed against a wall and run over by the rear wheels of a scab-driven bus. The death was ruled accidental and the driver released. Waterhouse was a member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1225, based in San Francisco.

The killing came just one day after a national walkout by more than 9,000 ATU members at Greyhound began. The strikers include 6,300 drivers and some 3,000 mechanics, cleaners, and clerks. A nationwide protest was called by the Amalgamated Council of Greyhound Local Unions for March 9.



March 15, 1965

MARCH 10 — Like a sly fox, President Lyndon B. Johnson mouthed hypocritical civil-rights talk but when the showdown came he sided with Alabama Governor George C. Wallace and Dallas County Sheriff James Clark in stopping the March 9 freedom march of Negroes and their white supporters from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery.

Wallace’s storm-troop commander, Al Lingo, and Clark’s whip-wielding posmen had stopped the attempted march two days before with a brutal assault that injured at least 86 marchers. TV viewers across the country watched the first part of the bloody attack by the troopers and posmen on the unarmed marchers.



March 16, 1940

The fight of the Transport Workers Union of New York against Mayor La Guardia and the bankers whom he represents is of profound importance for the entire labor movement of the country.

At this moment the workers on the subways, elevated lines and buses are working under closed-shop union contracts, which they wrested from the bosses after long and bitter struggle. All that the union is asking is that the present contracts continue in force.

But Mayor La Guardia declares that when the city takes over these transportation lines he will outlaw these contracts and any others proposed by the union.

This is as plain a case of union-busting as has ever been attempted.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today. It seeks to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. Its success depends on input from readers. If you are involved in a labor struggle or have information on one, please contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

Locked-out Texas aluminum workers win support

HOUSTON — Locked-out Sherwin Alumina refinery workers were buoyed by support from oil strikers and a delegation of international unionists in a Feb. 26 protest of some 100 here outside the offices of Glencore, Sherwin Alumina's parent company. The locked-out workers are members of United Steelworkers Local 235A in Gregory.

Sherwin Alumina locked out the 450 unionists Oct. 11, the day after they rejected its contract offer by 98 percent. The company's proposal included cuts in overtime pay for unscheduled work, increased health care premiums, elimination of medical coverage for retirees, and no pension, disability or widows' benefits for new hires.

"We're hanging on," said Freddy Arismendez, a locked-out worker. "We're getting support from the community, but the company hasn't brought anything to the table."

Among those joining the picket line were USW oil workers on strike in Texas City, Deer Park, and Houston; and Service Employees International Union members. The international delegation — representatives of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) of Australia; the UNITE union in United Kingdom; and the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa — had joined the USW members picketing the refinery in Gregory the day before.

"Workers will only put up with being stood on by the company for so long," Alan Scott, who works at the Glencore Clermont coal mine in Queensland,

Australia, told the *Militant*.

After the protest at the Glencore offices, many participants caravanned to the oil workers' picket lines and joined a jambalaya feast and family night at the Steelworkers union hall in Deer Park.

—Mark Simon and Danielle London

Oil workers' strike for safety enters 2nd month

Continued from front page

Organized by Steelworkers District 1 in Ohio, the Findlay rally was an example of the growing support for the oil strike, the biggest in 35 years. The walkout began Feb. 1 and currently involves nearly 7,000 workers. Overall, the Steelworkers represent 30,000 oil workers at more than 200 refineries and chemical plants.

"This strike is about safe staffing levels," said David McCall, District 1 director, who chaired the rally. "Since 2012, 27 oil workers have been killed. Last week there was an explosion in Torrance, California."

Management has been operating all but one of the struck plants with the help of contractors. The union is seeking an industry-pattern contract in negotiations with Shell Oil.

"Shell refuses to take these issues seriously," McCall said. "The only way they can defeat us is to divide us. If we have to reject seven more proposals, that is what we will do."

Striking Steelworkers Local 8-719 members from Kentucky were cheered as they arrived. "On the way here one of our buses broke down when the pipes froze," Dave Martin,



Militant/Danielle London

United Steelworkers members locked out by Sherwin Alumina in Gregory, Texas, since Oct. 11, 2014, march in front of headquarters of parent company Glencore in Houston Feb. 26.

vice president of the local, told the rally. "We piled as many as we could on the other bus and rented a van for everyone else."

Martin said refinery bosses have cut down the workforce to dangerously low levels. "Our numbers have been dwindling across the nation. This is a fight for safety, a fight for getting refineries staffed like they should be, doing the things that should be done — like maintenance. This strike is 30 to 40 years in coming. We are not going to give any more. One day longer. Right? One day stronger. Right!"

More than 60 strikers from the BP-Husky refinery took part, and Local 1-346 President Jonathan Cathers spoke of the explosion at the Exxon-Mobil refinery in Torrance.

"When I saw the photos I was shocked that there weren't any fatalities. This shows the dangerous conditions we are working in. We are tired of sacrificing safety," Cathers said.

After the march everyone went to the Steelworkers Local 207L hall for pizza. The local's members were locked out for three months by Cooper Tire in 2011-12.

"Everybody sees close calls," Matt Brim, a Toledo striker, told the *Militant*. "BP's fatigue policy is based on days, not hours. You can work 19 days straight on mandatory overtime. This means you could work eight hours or 15 hours or 19 hours a day, it doesn't matter, as long as you don't pass the 19-day limit. It's dangerous, to say the least."

Heather McClellan from Steelworkers Local 1-626 in Lima works at INEOS, where cyanide is used to make acrylonitrile for production of plastic. Her local is not on strike but is part of the National Oil Bargaining contract group. The company is trying to discipline her for refusing mandatory overtime.

"I'm a single mom," McClellan said. "I already worked through Christmas and was planning to celebrate later that week with my 10-year-old. They wanted to force me to work. I said no. You've got to take a stand!"

Linda Avers contributed to this article.



BY BOB SAMSON

DEER PARK, Texas — "Solidarity is better than I've ever seen it," Lee Medley, president of United Steelworkers Local 13-1 here, told the *Mil-*

itant March 1. "We get a lot of calls from people saying, 'Thank you, we know you're not just fighting for yourselves.'"

The Steelworkers want to take back daily maintenance jobs that the bosses have been systematically contracting out, some to nonunion outfits, others to companies organized by other unions. At stake is the industrial character of the union and its power to exert control over conditions on the job.

"For the duration of the USW strike," a Feb. 25 joint statement between the Steelworkers and the North America's Building Trades Unions said, "NABTU unions and their members shall respect the USW picket lines and refrain from performing struck work, with the understanding that rebuilding and/or new construction by NABTU union members shall be permitted and USW will assist the NABTU in facilitating such work."

At the same time, NABTU agreed that maintenance jobs should be organized by the Steelworkers.

Three strikers at Shell's Deer Park refinery here were arrested and jailed Feb. 23 for allegedly obstructing a highway while picketing at the refinery entrance. "We believe we have a right to picket," Medley said. "The guy that arrested them was an off-duty cop working for Shell. We bailed them out and are providing legal counsel."

"Why would a company refuse to guarantee workers the right to a safe workplace?" wrote former Texas District Judge Susan Criss in a column in the Feb. 16 *Galveston County Daily News*. "Because the lives and safety of their workers do not matter enough to cut into profits. Because the people that do the work generating those profits do not matter." Criss presided over 4,016 legal claims in the aftermath of the March 2005 explosion at the BP refinery in Texas City that killed 15 workers and injured 180.

"Why are the union members not backing down?" she asked. "Because they cannot forget the cost of working in dangerous conditions."

Bosses at Shell and LyondellBasell sent letters to strikers urging them to turn their back on their co-workers and the union and cross the picket line.

The *Houston Chronicle* ran a front-page article Feb. 27 featuring three workers who returned to work at Shell in Deer Park. The notorious

Continued on page 10

Anti-labor outfit targets oil strikers' union

An anti-labor outfit posing as a socialist current in the working-class movement is trying to convince striking oil workers to quit their union, the United Steelworkers, and weaken their fight against the refinery bosses.

The Michigan-based Socialist Equality Party, which runs the World Socialist Web Site, has a long history of anti-labor disruption aimed at workers engaged in often bitter struggles and at revolutionary working-class organizations like the Socialist Workers Party.

During and after the three-month lockout of Steelworkers-organized rubber workers by Cooper Tire in Findlay, Ohio, in 2011-12, the SEP handed out a so-called Cooper Tire Worker Newsletter, published by the World Socialist Web Site, charging the Steelworkers with betraying the workers. The tire bosses quoted their diatribes against the union in industry publications.

They've intervened against the unions in recent years in battles of workers at Caterpillar in Joliet, Illinois; Con Edison in New York; American Crystal Sugar in North Dakota and Minnesota; and elsewhere.

In a Feb. 18 statement posted on their website, Shannon Jones issues "A Warning to US Oil Workers," telling them to beware "the sabotage of their struggle by the United Steelworkers union."

Claiming to support "the revival of militant working class struggles," the anti-working-class group calls for strikers to abandon their unions, arguing all U.S. labor organizations are part of a vast conspiracy with the employers. They don't build solidarity. Instead, as hard-fought battles drag on they seek to get the ear of workers who get frustrated or discouraged.

Most workers are offended by the anti-union pitch. A Feb. 12 article on the World Socialist Web Site quotes a Toledo strike supporter ranting about a "fat cat union guy" who golfs with management. "Quotes they put in are far from what was said," a unionist who identified himself as usw4life responded. "I was right there walking and listening to what my fellow union brothers were saying. ... They are no longer welcome to visit and talk to our picket line."

—MAGGIE TROWE

How Lenin led the fight against national oppression

Lenin's Final Fight, Speeches and Writings, 1922-23, is *one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. Between September 1922 and early March 1923, the final months of his active life, Vladimir Lenin, the central leader of the world's first socialist revolution, led a political battle within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At stake was whether the party would continue advancing along the internationalist proletarian course that brought the Bolshevik-led workers and peasants of the former czarist empire to power in October 1917. Central to this battle was Lenin's uncompromising opposition to Great Russian chauvinism, as shown by the memo below, written to*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

the Political Bureau in October 1922.

In the second piece, Lenin responds to the abuses by Joseph Stalin and his allies against the people of Georgia, a Soviet republic and formerly part of the Russian czar's prison house of nations. The counterrevolution carried out by the Stalin-led bureaucracy after Lenin's death against his support for the nationalism of the oppressed peoples was a deadly blow to the workers' movement worldwide. The fight to reconquer Lenin's legacy is a crucial part of the struggle to defend



Humbert-Droz Archives

V.I. Lenin speaks at 1920 Second Congress of Communist International on fight against national oppression. "Internationalism on the part of oppressors or 'great' nations," Lenin said in 1922 article, must "compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life."

the national sovereignty of Ukraine today. Copyright © 1995 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY V. I. LENIN

On combating
great-power chauvinism
MEMO TO THE POLITICAL BUREAU
OCTOBER 6, 1922

I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism. I shall eat it with all my healthy teeth as soon as I get rid of this accursed bad tooth. It must be *absolutely* insisted that the union Central Executive Committee should be *presided over* in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc. *Absolutely!*
Yours,
Lenin



DECEMBER 31, 1922

In my writings on the national question I have already said that an abstract presentation of the question of nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation

and that of a small nation.

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. It is sufficient to recall my Volga reminiscences of how non-Russians are treated; how the Poles are not called by any other name than Polyachishka, how the Tatar is nicknamed Prince, how the Ukrainians are always Khokhols and the Georgians and other Caucasian nationals always Kapkasians.

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or "great" nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as Derzhimordas*), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped

* Derzhimorda, a policeman in the play *The Government Inspector* by Russian writer Nikolay Gogol, came to personify the rude, arrogant state functionary.

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the real proletarian attitude to the national question; he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.

What is important for the proletarian? For the proletarian it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to ensure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the "dominant" nation subjected them in the past.

I think it is unnecessary to explain this to Bolsheviks, to Communists, in greater detail. And I think that in the present instance, as far as the Georgian nation is concerned, we have a typical case in which a genuinely proletarian attitude makes profound caution, thoughtfulness, and a readiness to compromise a matter of necessity for us. The Georgian who is disdainful of this aspect of the question, or who carelessly flings about accusations of "nationalist socialism" (whereas he himself is a real and true "nationalist socialist" and even a vulgar Great Russian Derzhimorda), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity, for nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice. "Offended" nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards the national minorities. That is why, in this case, the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity and consequently of the proletarian class struggle requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question, but always take into account the specific attitude of the proletarian of the oppressed (or small) nation towards the oppressor (or great) nation.

address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

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March

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6

The Militant March 16, 2015

Venezuela workers bear brunt of oil price drop, US pressure

BY SETH GALINSKY

The more than 50 percent drop in crude oil prices worldwide over the past nine months has hit Venezuela especially hard. With oil sales making up 96 percent of Venezuela's income from foreign trade, plummeting prices have slashed the country's income, threatening government social programs and placing mounting pressure on workers and farmers.

Venezuela's toilers were already suffering from the effects of the worldwide crisis of capitalist production and trade and Washington's hostility and sanctions, ratcheted up since Hugo Chávez was elected president in 1998. He promised radical change and took measures that challenged U.S. imperialist domination of the country.

Bourgeois opposition forces look to the spreading economic crisis to unravel the government of Nicholas Maduro, who replaced Chávez after his death in 2013. However, the main opposition parties, now under the umbrella of the Platform of Democratic Unity, are discredited because most working people see them as craven supporters of Washington's campaign of intervention in their country and who seek a return to the days when the capitalist bosses and their government shot down protesting workers in the streets.

Maduro continued Chávez's course

of criticizing U.S. imperialist policy around the world, while advocating "21st Century Socialism" for semicolonial nations, rejecting both "savage capitalism" and the example of Cuba's socialist revolution.

The Chávez and Maduro governments used oil profits to fund social programs aimed at improving the living standards of workers and peasants. They welcomed thousands of Cuban internationalist volunteers who set up health clinics and schools in workers' barrios and rural areas and continue to do so today.

But Chávez and Maduro let capitalist property relations stand and declined to mobilize Venezuela's workers and farmers to fight for control. The government announced plans to use oil profits to diversify the economy, but mired in corruption they were never carried out.

Now those social programs are in jeopardy.

Washington despises the collaboration between Caracas and revolutionary Cuba and Havana's steadfast support for Venezuela. Ever since Chávez was elected, Washington sought to undermine the government, backing a 2002 coup attempt, which failed in the face of widespread resistance by working people, and two other attempts to oust the government. Caracas has continued to provide subsidized oil to Cuba.



Juventud Rebelde

Cuban President Raúl Castro, right, condemns "unacceptable and unjustified" U.S. sanctions against Venezuela at summit of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States Jan. 28.

Government attempts to ameliorate the crisis through administrative measures and complicated tiered exchange rates for U.S. dollars have exacerbated shortages and rampant corruption. Capitalist bosses claim they can't get enough hard currency to import goods and spare parts.

In January Maduro traveled to Saudi Arabia, Russia, China and Portugal seeking investments, loans and credits to weather the crisis, as well as a bloc to push oil prices up. He came back with little to show for his efforts.

Even before oil prices plummeted, inflation in Venezuela was running at 63 percent annually and shortages of basic necessities, from toilet paper to chicken and cooking oil, were endemic.

Bosses' economic war

Charging that he faced a widespread conspiracy, Maduro promised to use an "iron fist" against companies that hoarded goods or sought to capitalize on the crisis by sabotaging production and distribution in the hopes of boosting profits and weakening the government.

In early February he ordered a state takeover of the Día a Día supermarket chain. The media broadcast photos of a company warehouse full of goods, along with empty shelves in the stores, saying it showed proof of the bosses' economic war against the Maduro government.

According to the *Washington Post*, economic production declined 5 percent in the first half of this year and one-third of key goods are in short supply. Coffee production has dropped, with this year's harvest expected to be the third-small-

est crop since 1961. Previously an exporter of coffee, Venezuela will import 685,000 bags this year.

Maduro announced he is considering raising the price of gasoline, which is subsidized by the state and sells for just 5 cents a gallon, to bolster the government budget.

Washington has continued to intervene in Venezuela's affairs, meeting with opposition leaders and seeking to foster divisions in the military. Maduro announced March 1 that he was ordering a reduction in the number of U.S. officials at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas. He noted that there are 100 members of the U.S. diplomatic staff in Caracas compared to just 17 Venezuelan diplomats in Washington.

Since December President Barack Obama has banned more than 24 Venezuelan officials or their family members from traveling to the U.S. and frozen their U.S. assets.

"We express vigorous condemnation of the unacceptable and unjustified unilateral sanctions against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the continuing external intervention aimed at creating a climate of instability in this sister nation," Cuban President Raúl Castro told delegates to a meeting of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States Jan. 28.

Maduro announced Feb. 12 that several high-ranking air force officials had been arrested for plotting to overthrow the government, backed by Washington. Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma, a leader of the pro-Washington opposition, was also detained.

Ukraine workers mobilize

Continued from page 4

their heavy artillery, as a cease-fire originally declared for Feb. 15 largely took effect.

A Feb. 24 interview with Mykola Koziuberda, leader of the NPGU at the Nikanor Nova mine of the Luhansk Coal Association, describes some of the challenges workers in the separatist-held areas in eastern Ukraine are facing. The interview was translated by the U.K.-based Ukraine Solidarity Campaign.

"Nikanor Nova mine is one of a very few belonging to the Luhansk Coal Association which hasn't stopped working and has suffered practically no damage from the war," Koziuberda said. Nevertheless, since late July some 1,200 of the 1,500 workers at the mine have been idled and are not getting paid.

The union, officially registered at the mine since 2000, had 600 members at its peak. "We experienced heavy repression from the mine management over the years," Koziuberda said, including bosses bribing workers to quit

the union. By the summer of 2014 membership had declined to 220.

Asked about correspondence that shows officials of the self-styled Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) are refusing to recognize the Independent Union of Miners, which some "left" publications have claimed is a fraud, Koziuberda said, "The document is genuine. Moreover, I have personal experience of the leaders of the LNR not even wanting to hear anything about a social dialogue with independent trade unions."

Koziuberda said he was forced to leave Luhansk because of death threats "linked directly to my activity" in the union.

Selma march challenges erosion of voting rights

Continued from front page

in Recommitment to Voting Rights," Rev. Dr. Bernard Lafayette, SCLC board chair, told a Feb. 20 press conference held in the state Capitol.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, conquered by the mass proletarian movement of African-Americans and their allies in the 1950s and '60s that overthrew Jim Crow segregation, banned literacy tests, poll taxes and other racist measures designed to prevent Blacks from voting or running for office.

However, in the wake of the June 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down key parts of that act, a number of states have instituted laws restricting the ability of working people to vote.

"From voter photo ID, proof of citizenship to register and reduction in voting and voter registration days to the Shelby County v. Holder [2013] decision gutting the 1965 Voting Rights Act

and more," Alabama State Sen. Hank Sanders said at the Feb. 20 press conference, "Americans are losing the right to vote, which so many people sacrificed their lives and blood to secure."

The 5-4 Supreme Court decision voided the section of the Voting Rights Act that required states and local governments with a long history of racist discrimination to get prior approval from the Justice Department before making any changes in voting laws.

A number of different activities, organized by a variety of groups, are planned in Selma March 7 to commemorate the "Bloody Sunday" 1965 attack on the bridge. Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush say they will attend one of the events.

On March 21, 1965, about 3,200 people set out again from Selma, this time under the protection of federal troops. They marched about 12 miles a day and

slept in fields at night, arriving in Montgomery on March 25 with their ranks swelled to 25,000 strong.

Entertainers, including actor Danny Glover and singers Kirk Franklin, Ruben Studdard, Lady Tramaine Hawkins, The Blind Boys of Alabama and Richard Smallwood, will join in events in Selma March. 5-9. Some will participate in the march.

Leaders of the 1965 march will take part, including Diane Nash, then a leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. She helped organize the Freedom Rides in 1961.

The march will go through Lowndes County, where efforts to defend African-Americans against racist violence and to register Black voters led to the formation of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in 1966, a group independent of the Democrats and Republicans that ran its own candidates with a black panther as its emblem.

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Vidal: Cuba never should have been on US terror list

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A second round of talks between U.S. and Cuban officials on reestablishing diplomatic relations, which the U.S. government broke off 54 years ago, took place in Washington, D.C., Feb. 27. The shift in Washington's tactics against Cuba's socialist revolution was announced by President Barack Obama Dec. 17, at the same time as a press conference by President Raúl Castro announcing the return to Cuba of the final three of the Cuban Five.

The White House is seeking to fast-track the reopening of its embassy in Havana by April, while the Cuban delegation has emphasized steps Washington needs to take to remove obstacles to meaningful diplomatic relations.

"Cuban representatives reiterated the importance of solving a series of issues, which will allow for the creation of the appropriate context to resume diplomatic relations and open embassies in both capitals," said a Feb. 27 news release from the Cuban delegation. These include removing Cuba from Washington's State Sponsors of Terrorism list, allowing banking services to Cuba's Interests Section in Washington and assurances that U.S. diplomatic staff observe "norms governing the functions of diplomatic missions" in "compliance with national laws and non-interference in the internal affairs of States," the statement said.

Cuba has been on the State Department's State Sponsor of Terrorism list since 1982. Other countries on it are Iran, Syria and Sudan.

"For Cuba it is a matter of sheer justice," Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, head of the North American Bureau of Cuba's Foreign Ministry and the leader of Cuba's delegation, told reporters at a news conference in Washington after the negotiations. "Cuba strongly believes that it should have never been included in this limited list of countries and today there is no ground to justify the inclusion of our country on

that list."

The state sponsorship of terrorism issue is not up for negotiation, but "a separate process" of "evaluation" by the U.S., Secretary of State John Kerry said earlier. "Nothing will be done with respect to the list until the evaluation is completed."

"In our view it's not necessary to put it all in one package," Vidal told Cuban reporters after the talks. "If, for example, in a few weeks we receive some satisfactory news in regards to the matter of Cuba's removal from the terrorist list, I think we can be ready to then begin talking about how to formalize the reestablishing of relations."

Washington wants the two countries to open embassies prior to Obama's participation in the Seventh Summit of the Americas in Panama April 10-11, removing an obstacle to



FotosPL/Ismael Francisco

Josefina Vidal, second from right, leader of Cuba's delegation at talks with U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., Feb. 27. Removing Cuba from U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism "is a matter of sheer justice," Vidal said, and necessary for resumption of diplomatic relations.

the U.S. government's efforts to regain influence on the continent. For the first time, Washington has been unable to exclude Cuban President Raúl Castro from the gathering.

Among the issues still in dispute are provisions of the U.S. embargo and sanctions imposed for being on the "terrorism" list that have pre-

vented the Cuban Interests Section in Washington for more than a year from opening a bank account to handle financial transactions.

"We are working to try and resolve that issue," said Roberta Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs and head of

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Events discuss fight to end US embargo of Cuba

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — A range of viewpoints on recent developments in U.S.-Cuba relations were presented at a Feb. 19 meeting at the Service Employees International Union Local 1199 hall here. The program, titled "End the Embargo of Cuba Now!" was co-sponsored by the union's Latin American and Caribbean Democracy Committee, the Metro New York Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism, and the World Organization for the Right of the People to Health Care. Some 50 people attended.

Speaking were Ariel Hernández, first secretary of the Cuban Mission to the United Nations; Bob Guild from Marazul Tours; Luis Matos from the union's Latin American and Caribbean Democracy Committee; and Muata Greene, a retired paramedic with the New York Fire Department and member of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

"The blockade hasn't ended. What the U.S. government has changed is

its way of pursuing regime change in Cuba," Hernández said. He added that Washington hasn't changed the Cuban Adjustment Act — and its "wet-foot, dry foot" policy — which gives Cubans emigrating to the U.S. refugee rights that no other immigrants have.

No one will be allowed to intervene in Cuba's internal affairs, he said. Cuba "will never put our sovereignty or our principles on the negotiating table."

"Obama should be applauded" for the steps he has taken to open travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba and to free the Cuban Five," Guild said. "But the victory doesn't belong to the U.S. government. It belongs to the Cuban people, their leadership, other Latin American governments, and those of us here in the United States who fought U.S. policy" over the past half century.

Matos announced that 1199 is organizing trips to Cuba in April and November.

The meeting ended with a discussion on how to wage the battle to end the U.S.-imposed travel ban and embargo.

"Obama has far more power than he has exerted to alter U.S. policy toward Cuba," Guild said. "That's why it's so important to fight to end the U.S. embargo completely."

Pat Fry of the Committees of Correspondence proposed those wanting to change U.S. policy focus on influencing members of Congress.

Other participants at the meeting stressed upcoming public protests and activities, including a March visit to New York by leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women; an April exhibit of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, at a Puerto Rican cultural center in Lower Manhattan; a delegation to the May Day celebrations and an international solidarity conference in Cuba; and a May 30 march demanding freedom for Oscar López, a Puerto Rican nationalist leader imprisoned in the U.S. for nearly 34 years for his political activity.



BY OMARI MUSA

WASHINGTON — Nearly 150 sup-

porters of the Cuban Five gathered here Feb. 6 to celebrate the return to Cuba of Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino after more than 16 years in U.S. prisons. They joined Fernando González and René González who served their full sentences and were released earlier.

The event was co-chaired by Alicia Jrapko, U.S. coordinator of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5, and Netfa Freeman of the Institute for Policy Studies.

"We are here because of the steadfast solidarity of the Cuban people and international support for our fight," said Hernández, speaking by two-way video from Havana. "You in the U.S. were central to this support. Thank you from the Five and the Cuban people."

"The embargo still stands. Cuba is still on the list of state sponsors of terrorism and Guantánamo is still occupied," Jrapko said. "We have more work to do."

The event included a photo exhibit of events in the fight to free the Five by Bill Hackwell, a leader of the International Committee.



BY ANTHONY DUTROW

MIAMI — More than 150 people gathered here Feb. 1 to celebrate the freedom of the Cuban Five and the steps toward opening diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S.

Speakers included Wayne Smith, former head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana under the Carter administration, and Gloria La Riva, chairperson of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five.

The audience heard greetings from Havana by Gerardo Hernández and then from Ricardo Alarcón, former president of the Cuban National Assembly and for many years responsible for the Cuban government's work in defense of the Five.

The event was sponsored by a number of Cuban-American organizations. "We're now facing new struggles, for which we're better prepared," said Andrés Gomez, president of the Antonio Maceo Brigade.

New York City

HEAR LEADERS OF THE FEDERATION OF CUBAN WOMEN (FMC)

Leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women will be in New York for the UN Commission on the Status of Women. This year's delegation is led by FMC General Secretary Teresa Amarelle Boué, also a member of Cuba's National Assembly.

Sat., March 14

Reception: 6:00 pm • Program: 7:00 pm
Fordham Law School • 113 W 60th St.
(one block west of Columbus Circle)

Sponsor: July 26 Coalition of New York and New Jersey
For more information: www.july26coalition.org



Sharing the Struggle: Parents Against Police Brutality Exchange Experiences with Cuban Women

The Bronx • Sun., March 15 • 4:00 p.m.
2nd Christian Church • 595 East 169th St.

(Take no. 2 or 5 train to Simpson Street; transfer to Bx35 bus from Westchester and West Farms Road; get off at 169th and Franklin)

Snacks and refreshments will be served
For more information: 718-364-2879

These five soldiers

Continued from front page
years after they were arrested and railroaded to prison by the U.S. government. The trumped-up charges against them included conspiracy to engage in espionage and, in the case of Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder. Their real “crime” was their commitment to defense of Cuba’s socialist revolution.

Bowing to worldwide demands to free the Cuban Five was part of a broader shift in tactics by the U.S. capitalist rulers, who remain committed to their historic aim of erasing the example of the property and social relations conquered by workers and farmers in Cuba over more than 55 years.

The distinction “Hero of the Republic” had been bestowed many years earlier on Hernández, Labañino, Guerrero, Fernando González and René González by Cuba’s National Assembly of People’s Power — on Dec. 29, 2001, just days after a U.S. federal court had sentenced each of them to draconian prison terms, three to life without parole. But the occasion to present each of them medals corresponding to that recognition was the ceremony here in Havana marking the 120th anniversary of the reinitiation of Cuba’s war for independence in 1895.

Broadcast live on Cuban TV, the Feb. 24 event was both a solemn tribute to the Five Heroes and a moment of celebration and joy for the Cuban people. By decision of the Council of State, the Order of Playa Girón was also bestowed on each of them for their “decisive defense of the homeland.”

“Our first thought is one of gratitude and loyalty to those who throughout history, with their sacrifice, have made possible that we live in a socialist, revolutionary, victorious Cuba,” Hernández said, “conscious that it is up to our generation, and those which are to come, to defend the continuity of this work, the dreams and ideals of our liberators.”

Following Hernández’s remarks, Eusebio Leal, historian of the city of Havana, spoke about Cuba’s independence struggle against Spanish colonial rule. The program concluded with a performance by La Colmenita, Cuba’s world-renowned children’s theater group.

Speaking a few days later on



Granma/Jorge Luis González

At meeting giving awards to Cuban Five, Eusebio Leal, Havana historian, spoke on continuity of Cuba’s revolutionary struggle, dating back to Spanish colonial rule.

Cuba’s Radio Rebelde, René González said what touched him most about the ceremony was the emotion in Raúl’s face as he awarded the medals. “I think he was seeing his sons receiving from his generation the results of the struggle that generation has waged for so many years.”

Several days later Hernández, Labañino, Guerrero, Fernando González and René González spent five hours with Fidel Castro discussing their experiences. “None of the Five Heroes

carried out their work in search of applause, awards, or glory,” Fidel wrote in his account of that meeting. “They received their honorific titles because they didn’t seek them out.”

Below is the full text of the Feb. 24 remarks by Gerardo Hernández, released in English by Cuba’s Council of State. The transcript in Spanish will be run in the next issue.



Dear compañero Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and Ministers; Compañeras and compañeros:

Honoring the Cuban men and women who on a day such as this, 120 years ago, decided to return to arms to struggle for the homeland’s independence, is the best way to accept the “Hero of the Republic” honorific title, which has generously been awarded to five Cubans of these times whose achievement was none other than that of having fulfilled our duty.

José Martí, the soul of that national uprising of February 24, 1895, stated that the ability to be a hero is measured by the respect shown those who have been heroes. Thus, on a day such as this, our first thought is one of gratitude and loyalty to those who throughout history, with their sacrifice, have made possible that we live in a socialist, revolutionary, victorious Cuba, conscious that it is up to our generation, and those which are to come, to defend the continuity of this work, the dreams and ideals of our liberators.

The first thoughts of the Five today must be for a man whose leadership and strategic vision were decisive to the battle which led to our freedom, and who with his example instilled in us a spirit of struggle, resistance and sacrifice. And who taught us that the word surrender does not exist in the dictionary of a revolutionary, and who, very early on, assured all Cubans that the Five would return to the homeland. Comandante en Jefe: This distinction which we proudly receive today is also yours. (Applause)

To our Army General Raúl Castro, who did not rest until what Fidel had promised was accomplished, to all the men and women who already wear this honorable star on their chests, and were always an example to the Five, we say: This distinction is also yours. (Applause)

To the Cuban people who made the cause of the Five their own, and still today encourage us with their support



“The honor we receive today is a summons which demands that we rise to the occasion to meet the new challenges which the Revolution faces,” said Gerardo Hernández, saluting Cuban President Raúl Castro, at Feb. 24 ceremony formally awarding distinction “Hero of the Republic” to each of the Cuban Five. From left next to Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and (out of view) René González.

and affection; to the leadership of our country’s Party and government; to the mass organizations, institutions, attorneys, religious bodies, figures and governments from other countries which stood in solidarity with our cause: This distinction is also yours. (Applause)

We also thank the sisters and brothers throughout the entire world who struggled shoulder to shoulder with us, over 16 years of legal and political battles, and say: This distinction is

“It is encouraging to know that in this revolutionary people there are many ‘Five’ willing to sacrifice all for their homeland...”

— Gerardo Hernández

also yours. (Applause)

To our families, who struggled, suffered, and resisted with firmness for so many years, and to all of the persons who deserve to see this day but are no longer among us: This distinction is also yours. (Applause)

To the faceless heroes and heroines who will never be able to receive a public tribute such as this, but who have dedicated, dedicate, and will dedicate tomorrow, their lives to the defense of the country from anonymous trenches: Know, wherever you may be, that this distinction is also yours. (Applause)

This honor we receive today is, at the same time, a summons which de-

mands that we rise to the occasion to meet the new challenges which the Revolution faces. More than a few times since our return, compatriots have approached us to say that they would have liked to have had the opportunity the Five had to protect our people from aggression. To them, and to all Cuban patriots, we say that our mission has not ended, and that they can join in.

The updating of our economic model in an effort to achieve a more efficient, prosperous and sustainable socialism, as well as the process of re-establishing relations with the United States, create a conjuncture of change, which demands that all of us act with intelligence, professionalism, commitment and conviction, to identify and confront the challenges and new perils which are coming.

There are, and will be, many ways to defend Cuba, and Cuba will always need loyal sons and daughters to protect her. It is encouraging to us to know that in the heart of this revolutionary people there are many “Five” willing to sacrifice all for their homeland.

With Ramón, René, Fernando and Antonio, we accept with pride and gratitude this great honor which the homeland confers upon us. The homeland can count on these five soldiers who today, before our people, reaffirm our commitment to serve you until our final days, and to always be loyal to the ideas of Martí, of Che, of Fidel and of Raúl. Thank you very much. (Applause)



Estudios Revolución

Fidel Castro meets with Cuban Five Feb. 28 in Havana. “None of the Five Heroes carried out their work in search of applause, awards or glory,” Castro wrote the next day. “They received their honorific titles because they did not seek them out.”

Road forward for toilers in Middle East

The initiative of a group of young Muslims to organize a human chain to defend a synagogue in Oslo, Norway — a vivid demonstration of opposition to Jew-hatred after a spate of attacks on Jews in France and Denmark — is an example for working people around the world. More than 1,000 people, including Muslims, Christians and others heeded their call.

The organizers of the action correctly understand that Jew-hatred is not directed just against Jews, but is an obstacle to advancing any fight in defense of the rights of working people, including the fight against anti-Muslim discrimination and for Palestinian rights.

The vanguard initiative also points toward construction of a new revolutionary working-class leadership that can bring an end to the senseless cycle of Hamas terrorism and murderous retaliation from Tel Aviv in the Middle East.

Out of initiatives like this a leadership can be built that supports the right of Jews to move to Israel in a crisis-wracked capitalist world where anti-Semitism

will continue to raise its ugly head. A revolutionary leadership would acknowledge the simple reality of the existence of Israel today, while fighting for recognition of Palestine, against its division into Gaza and the West Bank broken up by a web of Israeli settlements, for a single, contiguous homeland.

Such a stance would also reignite and widen support for the fight against the second-class status of Arab citizens of Israel, the right to travel, including to Israel, and for land and water rights.

A leadership fighting on this axis would challenge the ability of the propertied rulers in Tel Aviv to divide and rule over Jewish and Arab workers. Grounded in a class-struggle perspective, it would strengthen working-class resistance uniting Jews, Arabs and others inside Israel, on a course toward overthrowing capitalist oppression and exploitation.

A Palestinian leadership that stands up to Jew-hatred, recognizes the right of return for Jews to Israel, fights for a contiguous Palestinian state and reaches out the hand of struggle to Jewish workers in Israel would inspire working people across the globe.

SWP statement on anti-Semitism gets around

A statement by Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Washington, D.C., titled “Workers Need to Fight Jew-Hatred!” is getting a response. “The poison of anti-Semitism seeks to divide and weaken the working class, pointing away from the propertied rulers as the source of attacks on our wages, hours, working conditions and safety on the job,” Scott said. “When Hamas hails the knife attack that wounded Israelis on a city bus Jan. 21 as a ‘bold, heroic act,’ it is a blow to common struggle by working people in the Middle East.

“Fighting all expressions of Jew-hatred is a precondition to advancing the struggles by the multinational working class in Israel and by the Palestinian people against national oppression.”

The statement, which appeared in the Feb. 9 issue of the *Militant*, was reposted by the Independent Political Report website (right).

The Socialist Workers campaign in Washington recently received the following email, with the subject line “Thank you for your stance!”

I am emailing you all the way from New Zealand because I want to thank you for your statement regarding anti-Semitism and Hamas. I left socialism several

years ago here as I felt the movement had become increasingly reactionary and sectarian in its support of an organization like Hamas. The minute we started advocating that it is OK for a bus driver in Tel Aviv to become a legitimate target for violence instead of someone who is my brother and comrade, we lost all sense of true Marxist principles.

I hope you are just the first of many socialists that takes this brave move and stands for true Marxist anti-racist principles.

Yours in solidarity,
N.T.



Statement posted on Independent Political Report website.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

Workers’ resistance is heating up ... help distribute the ‘Militant’



Militant/Yasemin Aydinoglu

Striking oil workers in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, talk with *Militant* supporter from New York on picket line Feb. 26.

The *Militant* is appealing to our readers to help get the paper around — to use it to build solidarity with the national oil workers strike, join in the fight to defend the Cuban Revolution and to share invaluable analysis of the big questions facing working people in the world today.

Since the oil strike began Feb. 1, readers from Houston report 19 oil workers there have subscribed and nearly 90 single copies of the *Militant* have been sold at picket lines and rallies in Texas.

Militant supporters talked to workers during shift changes at the Phillips 66 refinery in Linden, New Jersey, Feb. 26 and 28, and sold 25 papers to members of the Teamsters, Laborers and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, as well as contract workers who aren’t in unions. Ed Nodes, 57, an electrician, liked the article about Walmart raising wages as a result of a growing movement for \$15 and a union. “I think everyone should be in the union and get good wages,” he said.

— MAGGIE TROWE

Cuba-U.S. talks

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the U.S. delegation to the talks, at her Feb. 27 news conference.

A reporter from NBC News asked Vidal if “Cuba would be willing to think about returning Assata Shakur, which is one of the demands of the U.S. Congress for normalization.” Shakur, a former Black Panther, was framed up in 1973 for the killing of a New Jersey state trooper. After escaping from prison she fled to Cuba and was granted political asylum in 1984.

Vidal said that after the 1959 revolution in Cuba, Washington unilaterally abrogated the U.S.-Cuba extradition treaty, refusing to return former members of the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship who committed serious crimes in Cuba.

In addition, she said, that treaty doesn’t apply to any political activity. “Cuba legitimately has given political asylum to a small group of U.S. citizens because we have reason to believe they deserve it,” she said. “And once you have granted political asylum you can’t enter into those types of discussions.”

While Washington is pressing to rapidly open an embassy in Havana, Vidal stressed the need for U.S. officials to commit to observe norms of diplomatic conduct, including noninterference in the internal political life of Cuba.

The Obama administration, on the other hand, sees the diplomatic and trade openings as opportunities to intervene in social relations in Cuba. The Feb. 24 *New York Times* tries to paint a picture of some of these openings in an article titled, “Inequality Becomes More Visible in Cuba as the Economy Shifts.”

“As Cuba opens the door wider to private enterprise, the gap between the haves and have-nots, and between whites and blacks, that the revolution sought to diminish is growing more evident,” the article said. “That divide is expected to increase” with the amount of money that can be sent to residents of the island increased to \$8,000 a year from \$2,000.

These “remittances, estimated at \$1 billion to nearly \$3 billion a year, are already a big source of the capital behind the new small businesses,” the *Times* said.

Oil workers strike

Continued from page 5

anti-union National Right to Work Foundation has provided legal and other help to them.

Danielle London contributed to this article



BY PATTI IYAMA
AND JERRY FREIWIRTH

MARTINEZ, Calif. — Several strikers on the picket line at the Tesoro refinery here told us about the erosion of the union’s control over maintenance jobs and what it has meant for the workers’ ability to defend safe working conditions.

“Over the last decade or more, as maintenance workers at Tesoro — electricians, machinists, pipe fitters — retire or quit, they’re not replaced by new hires,” said Warren Kostenuk, an operator in the alkylation department. “Instead, the company contracts with a third party to bring in ‘contractor maintenance’ workers, some of whom may have never worked in a refinery setting before.”

“Summit drove us to test over 500 possible leak points a day, way beyond what was really possible, and this compromised both the safety and environmental effectiveness of our work,” said Scot Stanford, who used to work for nonunion contractor Summit at Shell’s refinery here. “But there was no union, so if I didn’t do what the boss said, I placed my job in jeopardy.”

He was later hired directly at Tesoro, doing the same kind of work, “but now I had a say in things — both concerning my safety and the way we did our work — because I was in the USW,” he said. “Plus we were only required to test 300 points a day.”